

Balanced Study of the CIA

By HAYNES JOHNSON

THE REAL CIA. By Lyman B. Kirkpatrick Jr. Macmillan. 312 pages. \$6.95.

One Sunday afternoon in the summer of 1942 a young, 6-foot-5-inch civilian eager for action packed enough clothes to last a week and headed for a rendezvous outside the old Raleigh Hotel at 12th and Pennsylvania Ave. At the appointed hour of 3 o'clock a black Chevrolet with District of Columbia plates pulled up to the curb, the driver nodded affirmatively that he was known as "Alex," the civilian entered, and the car sped away to an unknown destination. That was Lyman Kirkpatrick's introduction to the shadowy world of the secret agent.

Now, after OSS service in Europe, high-level intelligence tours around the world, and a final position as the No. 3 man in the CIA before his retirement in 1965, Mr. Kirkpatrick looks back on his career and assesses that intensely controversial agency which he helped to create and manage.

With the exception of Allen Dulles and one or two other men, no one is in a better position to give us an intimate portrayal of our intelligence operations. Mr. Kirkpatrick has not written that kind of book. He shows us little cloak and less dagger; he offers virtually none of that James Bond type of derring-do so much in demand these days; he never breaks a cover, discloses a secret, or violates a confidence. Indeed, he tells us little that is not generally known about the CIA.

What Mr. Kirkpatrick does is more important than dropping an occasional titillating or sensational anecdote about our intelligence community. He writes as a professional about a professional agency whose principal function, as he



LYMAN B. KIRKPATRICK

points out, "is the painstaking assembly of information." His approach is scholarly and cautious, his style clear and straightforward, his observations intelligent and useful. He has written a good book, and a valuable one. It will not, of course, satisfy those who believe the CIA is a sinister menace contributing to an erosion of American democracy. Nor will some of his remarks entirely please the CIA's more diehard defenders (and they are numerous, vocal and powerful in this city). That he falls in between these differing sides is a measure of his success.

Charges Unfounded

As Mr. Kirkpatrick sees it, most of the charges against the CIA are unfounded. In his view, the agency is well supervised and controlled by the President and the Congress. It does not, he says, have a blank check to carry out its functions; it does not make—or worse, subvert—U.S. foreign policy. These are standard, and predictable, positions for one who, like Mr. Kirkpatrick, believes the CIA is safeguarding the security of the nation. He does not, however, hesitate to criticize the agency for its failures—most particularly those involving the U-2 flight over Russia and the Bay of Pigs invasion. (His analysis of that latter disaster is worth the price of the book

alone.) He also clearly recognizes the fundamental dilemma posed by the presence of a powerful—and secret—organization working beyond normal guidelines of law and precedent.

"The American people have a deep concern, indeed fear, over the concentration of too much power in any area of our society," he writes. "When this power is in the government and cloaked in secrecy, then their concern is even greater. . . . It is a concern about secret power and the possibilities of its abuse."

Unlike some, he does not discount the possibility the CIA could become so strong it might pervert the freedoms it was created to defend. He calls this "a real and ever present danger"—a danger that "must be avoided by eternal vigilance in our system of checks and balances in the United States government."

One of Mr. Kirkpatrick's central themes touches on this dilemma. It is the old and unresolved problem of the CIA's dual role—of its overt, or intelligence gathering and analysis functions vs. its covert, or secret action "operations." For some years, there have been some who want to separate the two into different organizations, and some satisfied with present conditions. With such examples as the overzealous "operators" in charge of the Bay of Pigs in mind, Mr. Kirkpatrick makes a strong point about the entire use of secret operations.

Suggests Report

"The policy level of the government," he says, "should direct its use only in the most serious national emergency, and as a last resort before the use of military power." Even then, he says dryly, the use of covert action to implement foreign policy may be "counterproductive when successful; when unsuccessful it can be catastrophic."

He hopes the CIA will survive its blemished reputation earned through its heralded failures (without taking into account, as President Kennedy pointed out, its untrumpeted successes) and receive the confidence and support of the

though, that the wish alone will not make this true. As one way of restoring confidence, he looks to the President and the Congress. They should report more fully and candidly to the people about the CIA, he says, and adds, in a thoughtful conclusion:

"Conviction that the CIA is a necessity to national security is not in itself sufficient. There also must be assurance that the agency is under proper control and operating competently. This comes from the President and Congress. The President should ask his Foreign Intelligence Board to prepare an annual report that could be made public. The CIA Subcommittees of Congress should report periodically to the full membership. Neither report need divulge classified information. No sensible and patriotic American would want that, but they are interested in whether the CIA is a dangerous secret power or a dedicated public servant."

Mr. Kirkpatrick's opinions command respect; he deserves to be widely read and studied.